

Big Saigon Sweep Into Cambodia

U.S. SUPPORTING OFFENSIVE WITH ADVISERS, FIREPOWER

**Pentagon
Calls It
'Necessary'**

New York Times

Washington

The Defense Department announced yesterday that the United States is providing combat advisers tactical air support, air co-ordinators, medical evacuation teams and some logistics assistance for South Vietnamese troops attacking Communist bases in Cambodia.

Daniel Z. Henkin, assistant secretary of defense, said that North Vietnamese and Viet Cong operating from Cambodia "have posed an increasing threat" to American and allied troops in South Vietnam.

The Administration's unexpected move, which brought an immediate outcry by some members in Congress, will be discussed by President Nixon in a televised address to the nation at 9 p.m. today (6 p.m. PDT).

REASON

In the policy statement

read by Henkin, the decision to use Americans to support the South Vietnamese offensive was called "a necessary and effective measure to save American and other free world lives and to strengthen the vietnamization program."

While officials declined to say publicly how many Americans would be involved or how long the South Vietnamese offensive might take, some sources stressed the limited nature.

These sources estimated that the number of Americans in the operation would probably be "in the low hundreds." They also said it is anticipated that South Vietnamese troops and their American advisers would stay on Cambodian soil only until enemy arms depots and

See Back Page

**Policy: Why U.S.
Supports Attack**

From Page 1

bases could be destroyed, perhaps in a week or two.

Officials declined to give the legal basis for the administration's decision. This would be clarified by the President, they said.

The decision came after six weeks of intensive debate over the risks and opportunities of alternative courses of action against Communist sanctuaries in Cambodia, following the ouster of Prince Norodom Sihanouk as premier on March 18.

It was primarily an American decision that the offensive into Cambodia be staged, officials said privately, even though they stressed South Vietnamese initiative in public statements.

SAIGON

Henkin said Washington was "fully consulted" before the Saigon regime launched its offensive and that Saigon had requested American support. To help foster the image of Saigon's initiative, South Vietnam was permitted to make the first announcement both of the cross-border assault and of the American participation.

Ronald Ziegler, White House press secretary, said the decision to provide American support for the South Vietnamese offensive into Cambodia should not be viewed as Mr. Nixon's answer to the request of Premier Lon Nol of Cambodia for military aid.

More than three weeks ago Lon Nol appealed to the U.S.

to provide weapons for an expansion of his 35,000 man army to about 200,000. As an interim measure, Washington secretly agreed to supply, through South Vietnamese auspices, several thousand captured enemy automatic rifles.

SPECULATION

There was some speculation that tonight the President might announce a decision to provide American weapons to the shaky Lon Nol regime.

There was even some speculation that Mr. Nixon might hold open the possibility of providing American air support to Cambodian troops in actions against enemy forces near the South Vietnamese border on the grounds that they were a common foe threatening both the security of American forces and Cambodian control over portions of its territory.

Ziegler said Mr. Nixon "will discuss the entire situation in Cambodia as it relates to both Cambodia and U.S. forces in Vietnam."

Administration sources said the South Vietnamese offensive might have the following effects:

- If it successfully destroys most of the enemy's combat supplies in the area of Cambodia, known as the Parrot's Beak, which juts into South Vietnam, it should undermine for some time any enemy plans to launch a sustained offensive within the southern half of South Vietnam.